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## NOTES AND FRAGMENTS.

EARLY TEXAS NOMENCLATURE.—In casting about for fresh material from which to construct a chapter for *THE QUARTERLY*, it occurred to me that a review of the local names attaching to some of the old colonists, together with their significance, might prove interesting.

Though the number of men was so small, there were many whose surnames were the same, and, as they were all more or less known throughout the colonies, various prefixes were adopted to individualize them. These prefixes were the results of accident, incident, or the occupation of the party to whom they applied.

There was, for instance, "Popcorn" Robinson, who was the first settler on the site later occupied by Brazoria. The early arrivals mostly landed at the mouth of the Brazos, and, leaving their families and effects there, struck out into the interior in search of locations. Such a party, starting out up the river, struck camp on the site of the future town. Being pleased with the place, one of the party declared his intention of locating it, and as a preliminary step took from his wallet a handful of popcorn, which he proceeded to plant. The spot, however, proved to be on Austin's reserved land, but that didn't interfere with the claims of the corn. It maintained its ground, at least to the extent of giving name to the place, which became known as the "Popcorn Patch" until it was laid out for a town and rechristened Brazoria. William Robinson purchasing and settling on the "Popcorn patch," the name was extended to him. His family consisted of a wife and a daughter, who married one George Mosely. They probably have descendants in Texas.

The Brown family had the largest representation, with the Williamses a close second. Everybody has heard of "Waco" Brown, but it may not be so well known that his distinctive appellation was the result of an enforced sojourn among the Waco Indians. Then there was "Mustang" Brown, whose occupation was the catching of wild horses; with him in the business was associated one Hopkins, who also shared his title. "Sheep" Brown, living on the Brazos,

above San Felipe, owed his distinguishing prefix to a large flock of sheep, the first in the colonies. "Dog" Brown gained his unenviable notoriety by appropriating another fellow's dog. "Cabris" Brown having in like manner become possessed of a cabristo, or, as the Americans pronounced it, "cabris"—a hair rope,—figuratively speaking expiated his sin at the end of a rope. Then there were Billy Brown and "Buckskin" Billy, and "Little Buckskin" Billy Brown.

Robert Williams, who lived out on the San Bernard, being a man of property, with servants and "store" clothes, was distinguished from the various other members of the Williams tribe by the sobriquet of "Gentleman Bob." "Varmint" Williams, a member of De-witt's colony, was a collector of wild animals for menageries. His son Napoleon was the only one of the family that I knew. "Pot" Williams, the first constable in San Felipe, becoming engaged in a heated controversy with one Stafford while the two were in camp together, grabbed a small cast-iron pot and smashed it over Stafford's head; thereby earning for himself this euphonious appellation. "Waco" Williams was the first white settler in the Waco country.

Though the "Smith" family was well represented, comparatively few of them seemed to have attained that degree of prominence entitling them to a rechristening. Of these, Erasmus, or "Deaf," Smith is the most conspicuous, not even excepting the governor. Deaf Smith, however, was not, as I have seen it stated, stone deaf, though his hearing was quite defective. The suggestive title of "Picayune" Smith attached to the proprietor of a store in Victoria. Charles Smith, a denizen of old San Felipe, was known everywhere as "Beaver-trap," he having formerly been engaged in trapping.

There were two William Coopers, one of whom had a large stock ranch on the east side of the Brazos below San Felipe de Austin, and was consequently designated "Cow" Cooper. The other, from having had an encounter with a sawmill, from which he came off mangled out of shape, was called "Sawmill" Cooper. He, in company with one Cheeves, put up the first frame building in San Felipe, using it for a saloon.

Robert Mitchell, who gave name to "Mitchell's Bend" on the Colorado, below Austin, was the first man in the colonies to engage in hog raising as a business, which circumstance gave him the name

"Hog" Mitchell, in contradistinction to Asa and Eli Mitchell, who operated the salt works at the mouth of the Brazos.

Judge R. M. Williamson, from an unfortunate affliction which necessitated the addition of a wooden leg to supplement the natural member, which was drawn up at a right angle at the knee, was everywhere known as "Three-legged Willie."

The most amusing story of a name is one pertaining to one "Hop" Johnson, a citizen of the Redlands. It was told of him, and he didn't deny it, that, being in old "No. 9," a notorious gambling house in New Orleans, where the deluded votaries were being fleeced without mercy, he seized the opportunity when the game was at its height, the attention of the crowd being centered thereon, to sweep a pile of money into his hat and gain the door before the denizens of the place grasped the situation. Making for the levee, Johnson, by leaping from pile to pile of cotton bales, finally succeeded in eluding his pursuers and escaped to Texas with his winnings. Said he, in justification of his course, "It was all a thieving game anyway, and my method differed from theirs only in being more direct." His feats among the cotton bales won for him the name by which he was generally known, although he signed his name with three initials.

Later there was a man in Austin called "Ramrod" Johnson on account of the stiff dignity with which he carried himself. His real name I never knew, but he was for a time editor of the *Texas Sentinel*, later changed to the *Western Advocate*.

Capt. Matthew Caldwell, who settled in Dewitt's colony and took an active part in the revolution and also in the Indian wars, was familiarly known as "Old Paint," his otherwise healthy complexion being interspersed with patches of deathly white.

There were also a goodly number of Wallaces, and, singularly enough, they were all named William. I knew several of them, but somehow never met the celebrated "Big-foot" Wallace, the origin of whose nickname seems to be in doubt. "One-eyed" Wallace, who lost an eye in an Indian fight, was for a time clerk of the court of Bastrop county.

"Peg-leg" Ward lost a leg in the storming of the Alamo in the fall of '35, for which he was remembered in a position in the land office. There was about Austin in the early days also a "Quashy" Ward.

NOAH SMITHWICK.

THE MURDER OF THE TAYLORS BY THE INDIANS.—In his chapter on the Indian Tribes of Texas in Scarff's Comprehensive History, Capt. M. M. Kenney has snatched from oblivion a great deal of our Indian history; especially much concerning our troubles with Indians. But I have detected one error which he has evidently drawn from previous writers; mainly, I think, from Rev. Z. N. Morrell. It is in the particulars of the murder of Mr. Taylor and his wife in Grimes county, as given on page 748.

I read the first edition of Rev. Z. N. Morrell's "Fruits and Flowers" soon after its publication, but have not a copy of it now at hand. If I remember correctly, he tells the story of these murders nearly as Captain Kenney tells it. Morrell gives the date as 1839, and does not apply a Christian name to Taylor, but mentions him as "Mr. Taylor." His account, I know, is incorrect.

Taylor's Christian name was not John, as Capt. Kenney has it; his wife was not killed on a visit to the place of his murder; and they were not killed in 1836, the date given by Kenney, nor in 1839, that given by Morrell.

Here are the facts: Levi Taylor was killed by Indians March 8, 1837, while in a creek bottom hunting a cow. Another man, Alex Whitaker, was with him, but escaped. Mrs. Taylor, after her husband's death, moved with her children to the residence of Joshua Hadley, and dwelt with his family. She had three children: Franklin, John, and a little girl, aged respectively six, four, and two years. On the night of June 2, 1837, a band of Indians attacked Hadley's house, but were repelled. After they had retired Mrs. Taylor was fearful that the attack might be renewed, and attempted to escape with her children to the residence of Col. Joseph L. Bennet, half a mile distant. Hadley's family tried to restrain her, but could not. On the way she encountered the Indians in ambush, who killed her and the little girl. The two boys ran back to Hadley's. The Indians fired after them, wounding Franklin severely in the hand. John alone escaped unhurt.

Later Levi Taylor's brother, John Taylor, came and took the two little boys to his father, who lived in Tennessee.

I knew Levi Taylor well before his untimely death. I was one of thirteen men who buried him, and I was also one of nineteen who pursued the murderers of Mrs. Taylor and the babe, but the savages escaped. I saw the bodies of Taylor's wife and child after they had

been murdered, and I conversed with the two little boys after the death of their parents and sister. Therefore I am familiar with the facts in the case. They are stated in order to correct the error into which some earlier writer has led Captain Kenney, and for which he cannot be to blame. It is from a sense of duty that I make this correction; and under similar circumstances I should thank any responsible person so to correct me.

W. P. ZUBER.